

The Cabinet-Splitting Question: Shall Labor Talk Peace?

THE "Labor Crisis" in England, precipitated by the resignation of Arthur Henderson from the British Cabinet over the government's refusal to give passports to labor party delegates to the Stockholm Peace Conference, brings interest to bear again upon the riddle of labor's reaction to war.

In the United States, the American Federation of Labor, the largest body of organized workers, with Samuel Gompers at its head, is aligned with the war-making machinery of the country. The Industrial Workers of the World for all its cutury is not American labor.

European governments, on the other hand, have been forced to make greater and greater concessions to industrial labor.

In Russia the military forces and labor have joined hands to create and conduct government, and the articulates among the Russian proletariat have asked their prototypes in all other countries to do likewise. The tendency elsewhere in Europe is for labor to combine with all radical elements in opposition to the government.

In France the greater part of organized labor is wholly Socialist; while French unions are anarchistic, none are what one would term conservative. Therefore, labor's point of view must have been contained in that of the Socialists, who are willing to send delegates to the Stockholm Peace Conference only provided it is agreed to beforehand that:

"The proletariat of the nation attacked has claim to the aid of all proletariat of all nations, whether belligerent or not, an aid which may vary according to circumstances, from a simple protest to armed intervention, against the power disturbing the peace."

The American Skilled Worker

Is Labor's Autocrat

This avowal commits the French laborites. They are for and of the proletariat. "One cannot imagine," says an anonymous commentator, "the American Federation of Labor regarding itself as of the proletariat. That role it leaves to the Industrial Workers of the World. Perhaps, after all, the fundamental difference between European and American labor is one of condition. The American skilled worker is the autocrat of labor."

In England Lloyd George has said there shall be no soldiers' and workmen's councils. He has the power to suppress them. But the disclosure of his purpose to prevent labor delegates from going to Stockholm caused the resignation from his Cabinet of Arthur Henderson, recently returned from Russia. This produced last week's labor crisis in England. British labor anomalies are further complicated by the statement of the Seamen's Union that it will prevent the sailing of

any labor representatives to the Stockholm meeting.

During the previous week British, French and Italian Socialist and labor groups decided to send representatives to Stockholm. At that time their respective governments interposed no objections. Apparently they saw no reason for interfering. Labor in the Allied countries seemed a unit in favoring representation at the Stockholm meeting. They were not going in search of a peace of compromise which would leave peoples in suspense and at the mercy of fresh wars, it was said.

In the United States the State Department reiterated its refusal of passports, and Samuel Gompers, as head of the American Federation of Labor and as an executive member of the Council of National Defence, denounced the scheme. Mr. Gompers, furthermore, explained the stand he took—explained it upon a basis of plain patriotism:

"The working people of the United States are now doing everything within their power to help their country in its war against imperialism and autocracy. The Kaiser and Prussianism must be crushed, whether internally or externally, or surrender to the demand of the democracy and civilization of the world."

And on top of this came the assurance from the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy, of which Mr. Gompers is the head, that labor cannot afford to mix in the councils of a possibly premature peace while labor's chief foe, autocracy, still pursues its savage course:

"The American labor movement as a body is loyal to America and steadfast in its determination to help secure victory for this country and the cause of democracy. In pursuing this course it must be recognized that it is necessary for the labor movement to take steps from time to time to preserve working standards. This, as a matter of fact, is necessary in the most effective conduct of the war. It has nothing to do with those anti-American, pro-Kaiserist activities of which the People's Council is the promoter, and is, in fact, exactly in opposition to them."

Gompers May Have Given Lloyd George Courage

In the councils abroad it appears to have been understood that Mr. Gompers was acting with the knowledge and approval of the United States government. Comptre-Morel, a member of the French Chamber of Deputies, wrote in "L'Humanité" that he had received a telegram from Mr. Gompers stating that American labor could not possibly be represented at such a gathering. Mr. Gompers said that he, personally, would be on hand at the conference of the Entente Allies, to be held in London in September. Similar representations, it is said, were sent by Gompers to London.

It is possible the attitude of Mr. Gompers, so closely in harmony with that

of the United States government, gave Lloyd George the courage to challenge labor in England and to precipitate the crisis which culminated when Bonar Law made the following statement in the House of Commons:

"The law officers of the Crown have advised the government that it is not legal for any persons resident in his majesty's dominions to engage in a conference with enemy subjects without the license of the Crown is duly

the support of other Labor members of the Cabinet.

The entire press takes the stand that settlement of the controversy will have the greatest bearing on future conduct of the war.

American papers discussing the "split" direct attention to the undoubted loyalty of the British labor leaders and the importance of their position in the nation.



Samuel Gompers



Lloyd George



Arthur Henderson

given. The permission to attend the Stockholm conference will not be granted.

"The same decision has been made by the governments of the United States, France and Italy, with which his majesty's government has been in communication."

Mr. Henderson made an impassioned defence of his position and complained about the "unprecedented press campaign against himself, and the difficulty of finding a precedent for the conduct pursued by Lloyd George in regard to the case."

Some of the British papers view the conflict between labor and the Ministry as of very serious consequence. "The Observer" says: "The government is confronted with a crisis on the solution of which will depend the winning or losing of the war."

The Controversy Will Affect War's Future Conduct

A wide division in the labor ranks seems apparent as things now stand. A meeting of the party executive committee has upheld the position of Mr. Henderson.

"The Daily News" declares that as the government could not continue without the support of labor, friends of Lloyd George assert he would immediately ask the king to dissolve Parliament and call a general election in event of the withdrawal of other Labor ministers.

"The Times" and "Chronicle" on the other hand, state that Henderson hasn't

"The Springfield Republican" says, referring to Mr. Henderson's arguments in favor of attending the Stockholm conference:

"Their weight comes from the fact that from his dual capacity as labor representative and member of the British War Council or Inner Cabinet he had peculiar opportunities to learn the state of feeling in Russia in regard to the proposed international meeting, and not improbably he measures more accurately than British conservatives the importance which the Russian government attaches to the representation at Stockholm of Russia's allies."

On the other hand, "The Republican" points out that the labor party disavows all desire to crush Germany, politically or economically, and "stands opposed to all attempts to transform the war into a war of conquest." It continues:

"It is urged that by presenting the point of view of the British Labor party it may be possible not only to reassure suspicious Russians upon such points, but also to disseminate in Germany, through the medium of the German delegates, facts in regard to the gen-

eral situation and the purposes of the Allies which the German people have not been allowed to learn, and thus to strengthen the hands of the minority Socialists. This particular hope may prove chimerical, since German opinion seems much more susceptible to battles than to arguments, but if kept to that the attempt might do no harm."

"The New York Times" characterizes Henderson as "the first highly placed Englishman, since the war began, who

has shown himself lacking in a sense of honor." It asserts:

"He wanted the British labor men represented at Stockholm, and told the Cabinet so. He told them, and probably believed, that the Russian government was behind the move. If it once was, the change in government by which Kerensky became a virtual dictator and associated non-Socialists with himself in office changed that state of affairs. Kerensky notified the British government. Henderson gave his colleagues to understand that this had changed his own views, and that when he went before the Labor Council to discuss the matter he would discuss it with this in mind."

"He deceived his colleagues in the Cabinet and he deceived his constituents in the Labor party."

"Of course, such a man could not be permitted to remain in the Cabinet a moment after his real nature was discovered."

"The New York World" seems to approve the decision of the British to send delegates to the conference and regrets that there is so radical organization in the United States equally worthy to be represented there and to carry the message of freedom. "The World" declares:

"In spite of the controversies which have arisen in England over the question of British labor representation at the Stockholm conference, the decision of the party seems to be both wise and patriotic. It is evident from the speeches that the vote in favor of representation was influenced in no small degree by a desire to hold the Russian radicals in line and make them understand the situation that confronts all the free peoples. Acting

from such a motive, the British labor delegates may become a power for good of incalculable value."

Bernard Shaw Can't See the Stockholm Conference

Bernard Shaw ventures an opinion concerning the value of the conference at Stockholm:

"I am very doubtful about going to Stockholm. I don't quite see what we are going there for. Some Socialists are imagining that they have something to do with the war and that they will have an important part in making the terms of peace, but they will find that they will have nothing whatever to do with the terms, whatever desires they might have on the matter."

It would be more than fortunate if the United States escaped the industrial war experiences through which Great Britain passed in the earlier stages of the struggle. According to "The Baltimore Sun," this country is suffering from a slight attack of the same initial war symptoms which embarrassed the British government in the beginning, but we should get over them, and much more rapidly than was the case in England.

To assist the country in getting over labor troubles, and in some measure to circumvent them, the Council of National Defence announces the organization of a Labor Adjustment Commission, which is to have jurisdiction over all controversies regarding wages and working conditions in establishments executing government contracts. The new commission, it is announced, will, when selected, be composed of nine members, three of whom will represent the government, three the employers, and three labor.

The Council proposes that:

"Every contractor and sub-contractor shall agree to accept and abide by the decision of the Labor Adjustment Commission or Labor Adjustment Committee, as the case may be, and every worker accepting employment in any plant within the jurisdiction of the Adjustment Commission shall do so with the definite understanding and agreement that he will accept and abide by the decisions of the Adjustment Commission or the Adjustment Committee, as the case may be, in the settlement of any question affecting labor submitted to it for adjudication."

The Labor Situation Here Promises Problems

"The Springfield Republican," discussing the success of the Brotherhood of Carpenters in forcing the closed shop on contractors who are building army cantonments, says:

"Labor troubles are evidently ahead of the government, in spite of all the efforts that have been made to prevent them. They may at no time assume a grave aspect in any particular case; and that some difficulties should arise here and there is to be expected. How hard government officials are working to minimize the difficulties appears in the establishment of a new labor adjustment commission

by the Council of National Defence, which shall seek to adjust all labor disputes in establishments having contracts with the government. It is the purpose of the government to insist in all future contracts upon the eight-hour day and liberal pay for overtime work by the contractors, but nothing is said in the council's statement of its plans about the closed shop. Evidently if this issue is forced on any scale, as it seems to have been in one case at least, the government will be obliged to take a position."

The strikes of carpenters on army cantonment work, alleged to have been caused by the employment of non-union workers, involved 48,000 men. Union labor in some of the coal fields is engaged in another controversy over wages.

American seamen and their employers have come to an agreement on wages and working conditions, for the period of the war, which, officials say, solves the problem of obtaining enough men to operate the merchant fleet now being built.

Writing on "Labor and Capital in War," "The Chicago Tribune" says:

"Capital and labor continue their necessary struggle for terms of existence upon the condition of normal life. The domestic tranquility, the one within the nation, demands tranquility on the frontiers. If the frontiers be threatened, the domestic conflict continues at the hazard of all persons concerned."

"Moneyed interests which consult notions of abnormal profits, and thereby make it difficult for the nation to preserve itself, are hurting their own good. Labor interests which take advantage of emergency to cripple national enterprises are hurting their own good. If the domestic conflict continues when the domestic total of good is threatened there will be less to contend for, less that can be submitted to the adjudication of fair dealing or fighting, less to be gained, less to work for and less to get."

"Before we can struggle successfully for a fair distribution of what we have we must preserve what we have."

"The attacks made by certain labor leaders on officials of the United States Department of Justice indicate a lack of realization of these principles. It is alleged that because these officials intervened to put an end to strikes they were therefore working in behalf of the employers. But it is obvious that the purpose was not to fight labor, but to remove causes of disruption that might easily be fatal to our welfare in these critical times."

Deserter!



—From The New York World

A "Knight of the Golden Pretzel" Pokes a Hive of Bees

Senator Robert M. La Follette



THAT peace talk in Congress is the immediate signal for a fight is only another of the paradoxes developed by the war. An unusually sober conflict, with the press of the country demanding a showdown on pro-German peace moves in Congress, is that produced by Senator La Follette's peace resolution of August 11.

The holding of a peace meeting in the Senate room of the Committee on Military Affairs two days before Mr. La Follette's move charged the atmosphere with political gunpowder. Through a trick, according to Senator Chamberlain, the Council obtained his permission to use the room. When the Council had finished a lively meeting, in which Congress was denounced for passing the selective draft law and the impeachment of President Wilson was called for, the temper of Congress, if not of the nation, was decidedly ruffled.

Senator La Follette's move was the spark to the powder. He presented a resolution urging Congress to state definite terms on which the United States would make peace with Germany, using as a basis disavowal of indemnity or territorial acquisition, and restoration of devastated territory at the expense of all of the belligerents.

Let the "Potsdam Senators" Recite the Oath

One means at once advocated to counteract the evil effect of the resolution making it appear to Germany that the United States is divided on vigorously prosecuting the war was an immediate vote on the resolution. "The movement among loyal United States Senators to bring La Follette's crooked peace resolution to a vote cannot have too much expedition," says "The New York World," in commenting on a clever suggestion to discredit those favoring it.

"The plan of embodying in the vote on it a reaffirmation of a Senator's oath of office is excellent. Let them all be made in effect to swear or affirm as the roll is called that they will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. If the La Follette and the Gronnas and the other Potsdam Senators, if there are any others, can vote for this resolution while reciting that oath, let them do it. But let there be a vote, and an early one. Every day that the resolution stands where it is now is a day of comfort and aid for the enemies of the United States."

"The New York Herald," insisting that the Senate must discard the resolution immediately in order to remain in the good graces of the American people, thus analyzes the move as one favoring an indemnity paid to Germany by the United States:

"Mr. La Follette's resolution is no peace resolution. The proposal it embodies is as distinctly in the interest of Kaiserism as any that could be written by the blood-stained hands of the Kaiser himself. What Mr. La Follette advocates is that Prussian militarism be granted a truce, the breathing spell it so greatly desires for the purpose of strengthening its grip upon Germany and of preparing to launch a new war of conquest upon the world. In order to aid and abet and fortify Prussian militarism in that programme Mr. La Follette also proposes that the American people shall join with other nations in paying Germany an indemnity for the crimes it has committed against Belgium and France and civilization."

"That monstrous proposal puts the final

stamp upon Mr. La Follette's pro-Prussianism. It proves beyond question or cavil that Mr. La Follette is a traitor to the Americanism he professes."

"Unless America has become a mere meeting place for the assembling of people of alien races to which they may bring and where they may perpetuate their political thoughts and their Old World prejudices, Americanism is a state of mind. To be truly American is to live the principles upon which this nation was founded. The first of these is hatred for autocracy and for the principle upon which autocracy is founded, the 'divine right' of kings. Those who, like Mr. La Follette and his followers—wherever they may be found—would have the United States pay an indemnity to Germany for the

crimes she has committed have no right to call themselves American. Those who advocate a peace that would be a German peace, a truce in the interest of Prussian militarism, are traitors to Americanism."

What the Germans Want

Is Noise Over Here

"In Germany a United States Senator is a United States Senator, whatever his name is," "The New York World" continues:

"The mischief done by a peace resolution such as Senator La Follette has introduced is worked in Germany, not in the United States."

"The German people have no means of knowing that the Senator from Wisconsin is chronically against the United States government, and that he has identified himself with an unpatriotic minority ever since the first issue was raised between the United States and Germany. They do not know, and cannot be expected to know, that the La Follette supporters are found only in the ranks of the pro-German elements, the professional pacifists and the semi-reasonable Socialists who have been doing the Kaiser's dirty work in this country since the beginning of the war."

"These people are noisy, but they represent a very small part of the American people. What the German government is concerned about is not numbers but noise, and when a United States Senator introduces a pro-German resolution in the Senate that fact can be made of the utmost importance in influencing the German people to believe that the United States has no intention of seeing the war through."

The issue, "The World" continues, is similar to that which had to be fought out in Congress previous to the arming of American merchantmen, and should therefore be settled at once so that the American people may also "know the exact number of members of the treaty-making branch of Congress who are prepared to vote in favor of the Potsdam peace terms that Senator La Follette proposes."

The Effect All This May Have on Russia

Not to suppress this movement at once also endangers Russia. "The New York Times" points out, drawing a parallel between the misleading reports sent from Russia to this country and those sent from here by pro-German elements, concerning American dissatisfaction with the war:

"Among the Washington dispatches announcing Senator La Follette's 'peace' resolution and other 'pacifist' activities of the day, that published in 'The World' and written by Louis Seibold is distinguished by a delicate humor. Mr. Seibold begins his dispatch as follows:

"Regarding the warning brought by the recently returned mission sent to Russia, that peace agitation in this country would be interpreted in that struggling democracy as a breach in American unity, the promoters of various projects designed to justify such an impression continued their activities to-day."

"The deft humor of this consists in the

word 'disregarding.' For, of course, Senator La Follette and the other 'pacifists' did not disregard, but regarded, the warning; regarded it with keen delight and saw in it a splendid opportunity. When Mr. Seibold wrote the word 'disregarding' the phrase really in his mind was something like this: 'Seizing with joy on the state of affairs disclosed by the warning,' or 'Welcoming the opportunity to strike a blow at this government which was suggested by the warning.'

"The mission returns from Russia warning this country of the great disaster which is imminent if the peace agitators continue their labors, and instantly the agitators redouble them. Right on the heels of the warning Senator La Follette introduces his resolution proposing that the world submit to Germany and that France and Belgium shall contribute money to make good the damage done in their countries by the German army. The plan to start a peace party next month takes on new vigor, and it is announced that pacifist candidates will be placed in the field in local elections. These demonstrations are not originated in instant reaction to the warning brought home from Russia; they are the result of that warning. They are undertaken in order that the disaster of which the Root mission warns the country may come about."

More Harm Than a Million German Soldiers Can Do

Charles Edward Russell, a member of the Root mission, explained in an interview how such a thing as this could be brought about "by intelligent action," as "The Times" later phrased it, "of our

Another Enemy Appears



The "closed-shop" agitation—Now's the time to hit him!

—From The Sun, Baltimore

pacifists." Mr. Russell—who, by the way, it should be remembered, recently withdrew from the Socialist party because of its attitude toward the war—declared that

"Every pacifist in this country that goes about prattling of peace, every Congressman that introduces a peace resolution, every Senator that is playing the German game,

is doing far more harm to the United States, to the cause of democracy, to the ideals of his country, than a million German soldiers on the battle line can do."

To which "The Times" responds, in an aside:

"One can imagine how Senator La Follette's eyes glisten as he reads that. More harm 'than a million German soldiers on the battle line.' This is better than he dreamed."

"The New York Sun" rejoices in the announcement that La Follette's activities and those of the People's Council are part of a plan to create a new Peace Party, the platform of which shall be peace at any price and the immediate purpose the election next year of a Congress pledged to that policy of "national pusillanimity."

Says "The Sun":

"We are not sure that this purpose should not be commended. If the nation could get all its bad eggs in one basket a mighty purification could be worked by burying the basket. If all the big and little snakes of pro-Germanism had but one neck decapitation would be easy and effective. If we could but get La Follette and Stone, Gronnas and Vardaman into one organization, what the people would do to that organization can be guessed at the first try."

"But a name for the new La Follette-Vardaman-Gronnas organization? Why not unite apt historical allusion with neat reference to its present-day affiliations and a recognition of its contemptible nature by calling it the Knights of the Golden Pretzel?"

Would Have America Chip in to Pay Germany

The appearance of the resolution, "The New York Herald" notes, is rather interesting, just at the time of the admission of Lieutenant General Baron Freytag-Loringhove, chief of the supplementary General Staff of the German army, of the falsity of the German pretence that the violation of Belgian neutrality was due to preparations by France to invade Germany:

"That admission is made as part of Germany's military history. It adds nothing to world history, since the world long has known the facts; but, taken in connection with the admission in the Kaiser's letter to President Wilson, it destroys the defence of Germany advanced by German apologists and German propagandists in this country, leaving the invasion of Belgium revealed as just what it was—a wanton attempt to stamp out a small and weak nation 'on strategic grounds.'"

"That act Mr. La Follette's resolution, submitted to the Senate of the United States, condones by inference if not in direct words. Instead of forcing Germany to pay—and pay through the nose—for its invasion of Belgium and for the many unspeakable crimes that were incident to and part of that great international crime, Mr. La Follette would have the American people and the peoples of the more immediate victims of German frightfulness 'chip in' and pay Germany's debt!"

"Such a proposal is not only monstrous in itself, but it contains in itself proof that

there is no Americanism in its proposer."

And "The New York World" adds: "There is in Mr. La Follette's bad day's work a vein of sentiment little known in modern Prussianism. For the rest, it might have been written by Chancellor Michaelis. If there were a statute for the declaration of origin of ideas, as of inanimate merchandise, it should be labelled, 'Made in Germany!'"

About the People's Council's Peace Resolution

Connection between Senator La Follette's actions and the activities of the

Das Azbestos Peace!



By Camouflage Bill of Missouri

—From The New York Herald

People's Council of New York City, a pacifist organization, is suspected, although Senator La Follette asserted that the resolution originated solely with himself. However, his daughter, Miss Fola La Follette, is a member of the organization, and, moreover, the Council has been exerting itself in behalf of a declaration of peace terms along the lines advocated by Senator La Follette.

According to Louis P. Lochner, executive secretary of the Council, that body sent a delegation to Washington several days before Senator La Follette's speech, and the Senator received a copy of a resolution on peace terms favored by the Council. Whether that resolution influenced the Senator or had anything to do with the introduction of his resolution Mr. Lochner did not know. One of Mr. Lochner's assistants, however, admitted that there was "substantially no difference" between the resolution on peace terms favored by the Council and that introduced by Senator La Follette.